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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

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115
27 June 1967

State Dept. review completed

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Information as of 1600
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HIGHLIGHTS

Communist units--probably elements of the NVA 325th Division--shelled US Marine positions near Ke Sanh on 27 June. General Duong Van Minh (Big Minh) has announced that he wants to return to Saigon from exile in Bangkok to run for the presidency.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Communist mortar fire directed at US Marine positions in western Quang Tri Province early on 27 June caused more than 100 American casualties (Paras. 1-3). Gio Linh again struck by Communist artillery (Para. 4). Operation BILLINGS, a successful sweep operation in the Communists' War Zone "D" north of Saigon ended yesterday (Paras. 5-6).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: Premier Ky named Nguyen Van Loc as his running mate on 27 June and Chief of State Thieu chose Trinh Quoc Khanh (Para. 1). General Duong Van Minh told a reporter in Bangkok that he intends to run for president (Para. 2).

Foreign Minister Tran Van Do intends to run for the Senate (Para. 4). The Provisional National Assembly has set 5 November as the date for lower house elections (Para. 5).

III. North Vietnamese Military Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

IV. Other Communist Military Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. More than 100 American casualties were reported when five US Marine field positions near Khe Sanh in northwestern Quang Tri, Province were shelled by Communist 60-mm. and 82-mm. mortars early on 27 June. Several hours later, the Marine garrison at Khe Sanh was hit by 50 Communist 102-mm. rockets.

2. These well-planned and executed enemy barrages which resulted in six Americans killed and 96 wounded may have been mounted by elements of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) 325th Division known to be operating in the area. The American forces involved are participants in the six-week-old Operation CROCKETT which has been sweeping the extreme western portion of Quang Tri Province in search of infiltrating NVA troops and supply and storage areas.

3. Although enemy losses resulting from US reaction efforts to the attack of 27 June are unknown, this operation had previously accounted for 149 Communist soldiers killed.

4. This series of Communist bombardments in western Quang Tri Province followed closely an attack on the US heavy artillery position at Gio Linh in the eastern section of Quang Tri Province. Late on 26 June, 26 rounds of 85-mm. artillery fire were directed at the heavy artillery and caused damage to some supporting facilities. No damage was reported to the long-range 175-mm. weapons, however.

5. Operation BILLINGS, a two-week-long sweep by eight battalions of the US 1st Infantry Division in the Communists' War Zone "D" north of Saigon, ended on 26 June. There were 347 Communist soldiers killed during the operation compared with 45 US troopers killed and 201 wounded.

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6. Most of the casualties on both sides were suffered during two sharp encounters on 14 and 17 June in southeastern Phuoc Long Province. The enemy forces involved are believed to have been elements of the Viet Cong 9th Light Infantry Division which is known to have moved from Tay Ninh to Phuoc Long Province in late April. [REDACTED]

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suggest that a regiment of the 9th moved toward the south on 12 May to participate in the attack on Bien Hoa Air Base. Operation BILLINGS has almost certainly upset other planned enemy attacks of this kind.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Premier Ky and Chief of State Thieu revealed the names of their vice-presidential running mates on 27 June, and Thieu officially filed as a presidential candidate. Ky's running mate is southerner Nguyen Van Loc, chairman of the advisory Peoples-Army Council. Trinh Quoc Khanh, another southerner of the Hoa Hao religious sect, will complete Thieu's ticket. Civilian candidate Tran Van Huong also filed his candidacy on 27 June, leaving Ky as the only major candidate who has not yet filed.

Big Minh

2. In an interview with the Bangkok Post on 27 June, General Duong Van Minh (Big Minh) said he wants to run for the presidency in South Vietnam. He also disclosed that he had already cabled Premier Ky of his plans, but he apparently did not reveal what steps he would take if Ky refuses to let him return to Vietnam. In a talk with a US official in Bangkok, Minh indicated that if action is not taken on his request before 30 June, the filing deadline for presidential candidates, he will expose Ky's delaying tactics.

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Tran Van Do to Run for Upper House

4. Foreign Minister Tran Van Do told an embassy officer on 27 June that he intends to run for the Senate. Do was previously reported to be under consideration as Chief of State Thieu's running mate. He apparently will not resign as foreign minister until after the elections.

Lower House Election Date

5. The Provisional National Assembly has again challenged the Directorate's wishes and has voted to hold lower house elections on 5 November. The Directorate had favored 1 October. Before the vote was taken, several deputies proposed soliciting the Directorate's views, but the suggestion was disregarded.

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